

My name is Courtney Baehr. I have been with the Certification office for 8 years. My time in the office has mostly been spent working on the criminal history record checks for administrators, teachers, educational specialists, educational technicians and all of those not requiring certification, such as your bus drivers, secretaries and custodians. In processing those applications we are looking for criminal history that is of concern, for example (and not limited to) crimes against children, violent crimes, a pattern of criminal activity, recent criminal activity and lack of proof of rehabilitation. Things we are not concerned with: one OUI from 25 years ago, marijuana possession from 15 years ago, petty thefts due to a college prank; these are not items of concern. That being said, when we issue out a credential we are not, by law, allowed to share any criminal history record information with you at the local level. That is confidential information by law. However, you as Superintendents are allowed access to the State criminal history information of your employees. To get this information you would need to contact [james.a.woodside@maine.gov](mailto:james.a.woodside@maine.gov) . He will be able to provide you with State-only background information on any of your employees. This does not include any Federal information, so if any employee has come from out of state it is highly recommended that you do not allow them into the schools until they have been issued a credential by our office. Right now I am processing approval applications that were received by our office on 6/27. Please know it is common to receive 100 applications per day of just approvals so if you need someone in the schools this coming fall, please make sure they have their application in now, if possible.

To clarify the fingerprinting process, each person who is having their prints taken for the first time needs to register online for the site and the date they would like to attend. There is a \$55 fee that they must pay online at the time of registration. The applicant who wants ONLY a CHRC card must also send in the approval application and \$15 fee and the print results will be matched by our office and a 5 year card will be issued to them. It typically takes 48 hours for us to get the fingerprint results into our office. Those applying for an Ed Tech or Teacher certification do not need to apply for the approval card.

If an applicant sends in an application and their fingerprints have not arrived to our office or they have not been fingerprinted, they will receive an 8 week temporary card until those fingerprints are completed. This is the ONLY instance where a temp card is issued; when they have applied for approval and we do not have the fingerprint results in our office yet. Ed Tech and Teacher applicants do not receive a temp card at any time.

For those employees who need to have their fingerprints re-checked, this is a \$24 fee (not including the fee for whatever application they are submitting). The prints are sent over to the state police for processing and this can take up to 6 weeks. If time is of concern, anyone can be re-fingerprinted at any time and the results will get to our office faster. Please inform the applicant to let us know they have been re-printed at the time their application is submitted. Those needing a re-check are employees who have NOT been continuously employed in the schools for the past five years. Substitutes and coaches are never considered continuously employed, they always need the 5 year re-check. If we do not see the accurate data recorded in MEDMS/NEO the applicant may be charged unnecessarily. Please make sure all staff members are accurately reported on MEDMS/NEO to avoid any undue fees.

Who needs to get fingerprinted? Short answer, if you question it, get it done. If someone has access to children while in your buildings **at any time**, it is highly recommended they get a background check. These positions may include, but are not limited to, volunteers, contract employees and adult ed teachers.

In closing, we have our standards on who we will approve and deny as far as criminal history record checks. You being the employer do not have to employ someone just because we approve them. We often get questions about what a school has seen on a background check and as to why we approved them, and I always advise that employment is up to you, credentialing is up to us.